

Louisiana Technology Innovations Fund: Final Report



my.LSUE: Providing Anytime – Anywhere Access to Academic and Support Services for the Improvement of Student Success and Satisfaction.



Project Leader: Ron Wright, Director of Information Technology
Louisiana State University at Eunice
P.O. Box 1129
Eunice, LA 70535
(337) 550-1342
(337) 550-1306 (FAX)
Email: rwright@lsue.edu

I DEPARTMENT/AGENCY

Louisiana State University - Eunice

II PROJECT TITLE

Extending the Campus Walls: Providing Anytime-Anywhere Access to Academic and Support Services to Improve Student Success and Satisfaction.

III PROJECT LEADER

Ron Wright
Louisiana State University - Eunice
P.O. Box 1129
Eunice, LA 70535
Voice: (337) 550-1342
Fax: (337) 550-1306
Email: rwright@lsue.edu

IV DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

In November of 1998, Louisiana State University at Eunice received a grant from the Louisiana Technology Innovations fund to create a system providing anytime – anywhere access to key campus services. my.LSUE was the result of this endeavor. It provides students with increased access to traditional academic and support services through the innovative use of familiar technologies. The system currently provides secure, “anytime-anywhere” access to the following services:

- ?? Administrative student data including the ability to register for courses, retrieve course history and transcript information, and to review student billing and financial aid status.
- ?? Complete access to on-line library resources, which in the past were only available to students on campus. This includes access to the Louisiana On-Line University Information System library catalog as well as numerous searchable academic databases.
- ?? The ability to communicate with campus offices through a single intuitive user interface. This allows students who do not have an opportunity to visit the campus to still conduct needed business. This interface is also used to facilitate on-line collaborative learning opportunities, allowing our faculty and students additional methods of communications to enhance the traditional classroom experience, through the ability to interact and collaborate outside by the physical classroom.
- ?? The ability to access course history and advising information on-line through these same intuitive interfaces in an effort to increase student satisfaction and awareness of the academic process.
- ?? Complete access to student data by academic advisors in an easy to navigate web interface. All information is presented on a single page, therefore eliminating many of the problems encountered in complex advising systems. The system also provides reminders from the ‘Cyber Advisor’, which alerts academic advisors to critical situations for the advisee.

Concentrating on ease of use and availability, it was decided that services should be accessible through high profile, recognizable outlets around the campus. Additionally, to facilitate widespread use all services should be available through the World Wide Web. The result is a unique web service offered through both traditional access methods as well as custom-built electronic kiosks.



V POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Executive Summary of Findings

User response to my.LSUE has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic. While users are at times reluctant to pursue change, the masses have had favorable things to say about the new system. Careful consideration was given to address the needs and shortcomings of the old advising system. This had long been a point of contention with the faculty. The flexibility of the new system has allowed us to revise the registration / advising process and essentially separate the two resulting in fewer lines which translates to happier faculty and students.

Students can now be advised and “cleared” to register weeks before a registration period opens. Likewise, while registration periods previously ran for only a few weeks at a time, they now remain open from the first day of pre-registration through the end of late registration. Therefore, the end result is that the entire process has now evolved into a much friendlier experience for the student from the time of their admissions to the time of their graduation or transfer from LSUE.

Students have taken to the system very quickly; and as it is with any project, we had groups of students that you would consider as “early adopters”. These students, in turn, quickly showed friends and fellow students what they were able to do with the system and things grew exponentially from that point. Many students have expressed surprise at the ease of the new process. For example, student accounts are built as part of the institutions admissions process. User ID numbers and PINs are sent as part of the student’s acceptance letter. As our students have transferred to other area four-year institutions to continue their studies, we have begun to receive calls from officials of these institutions inquiring about the “my.LSUE” system to which our former students keep referring.

Working in higher education technology management can at times be a difficult job. Users call to complain, but rarely to complement when things are going well. This project has provided somewhat of a “light at the end of the tunnel”. It is a great feeling to walk down the halls and see the volume of use the kiosks receive and from the wide variety of students using them. This project has truly allowed us to change the way the campus looks at our office and the services we provide. It is also the perfect example of how a small institution, with an even smaller staff, can use technology to provide its users with the services many would expect only from much larger, well-funded universities. LSUE is extremely thankful for the opportunity the LTIF grant program has provided.

Accomplishments and Best Practices Identified

As stated in the original grant proposal, the primary goal of the project was to increase student satisfaction and retention. While only a piece of the overall university effort in this area, my.LSUE appears to be notably fulfilling its mission. LSUE was recently recognized by the Louisiana Board of Regents as the fastest growing institution in the state. The results of student and faculty satisfaction surveys show marked improvements in the service areas supplemented by the my.LSUE system. Student use of the system has grown to the point that we have recently decommissioned our telephone registration system due to lack of use caused by the implementation of my.LSUE. This has resulted in a considerable cost savings, which is outlined later in the report.

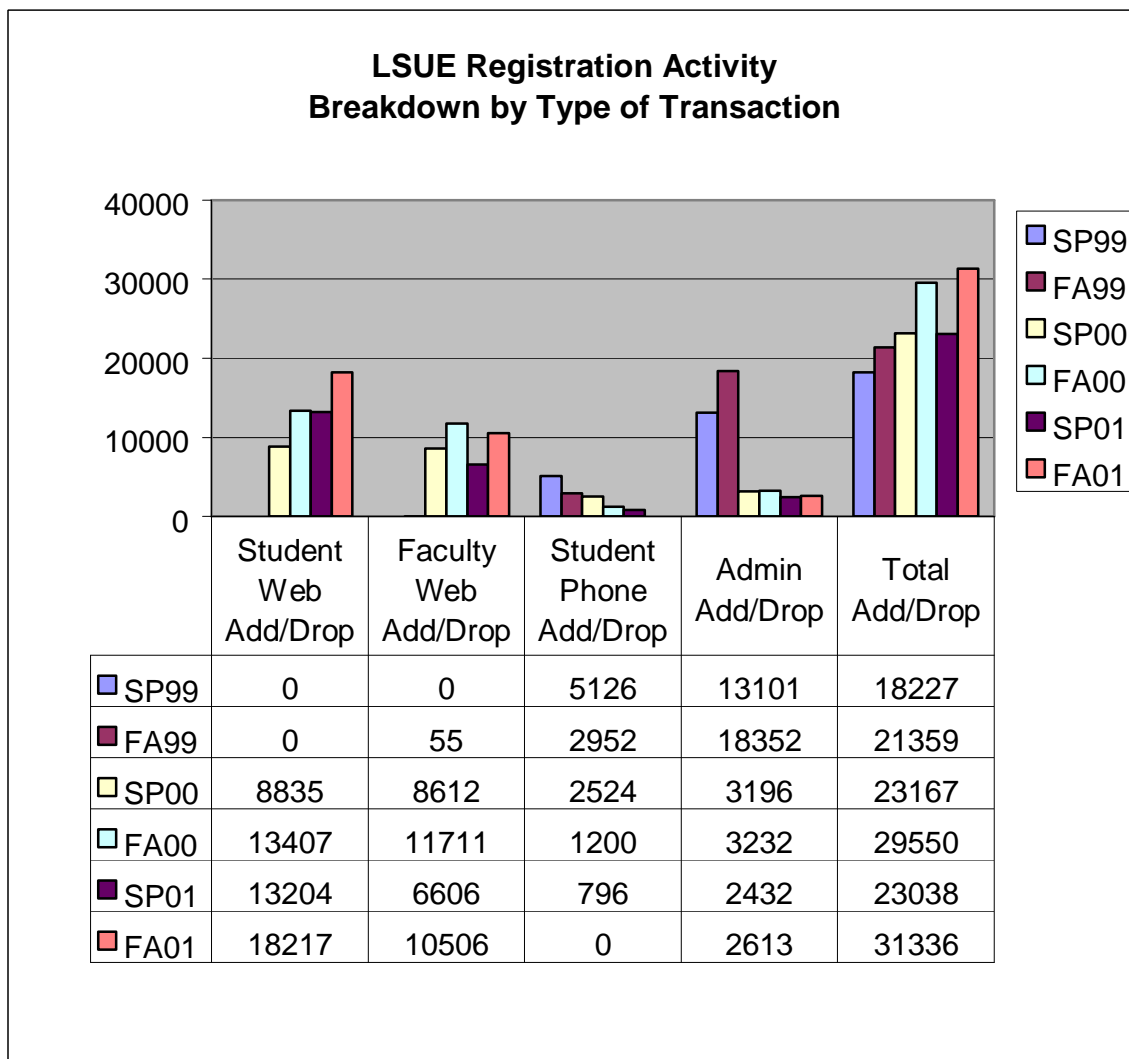


What are Students Saying.

"Once students began to hear about the my.LSUE system, it caught on really quickly. Registration via the system is more convenient than having to come on campus to meet with your advisor and schedule classes. The course-specific links allow us to easily keep up with the lectures and continue discussions outside of the classroom. My chemistry instructor is taking full advantage of the technology. We are encouraged to offer and receive assistance on homework problems and other assignments from fellow students through the system. Students who do not have a PC at home love the fact that they are given an e-mail account that is so easy to use. It is also a simple way for non-traditional students to learn to use a computer."

--Catherine Biessenberger, LSUE Student

Registration Activity.



System Usage.

my.LSUE has been openly accepted by both faculty and students. This is easily seen when looking at access statistics.

August 9, 2000 – June 16, 2001

Number of Logins:	270,929
Students:	234,958
Faculty:	35,321

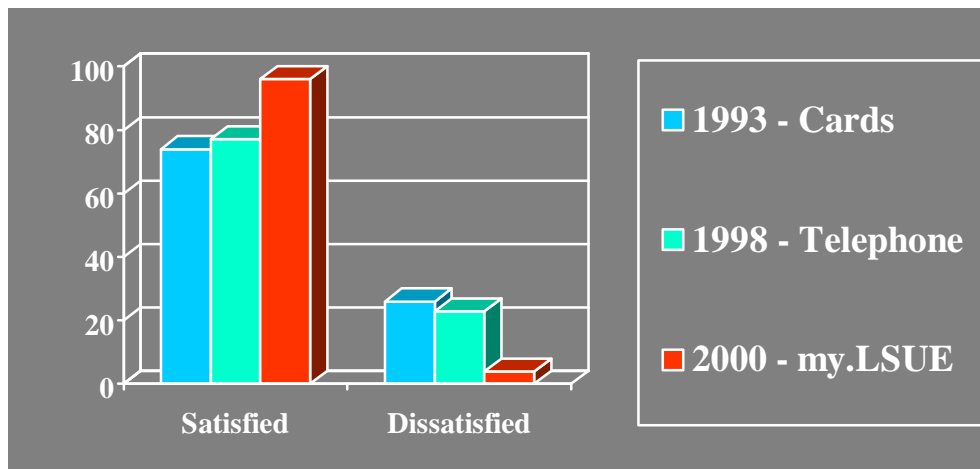
Number of Page Views: 1,130,156
Fall Campus Enrollment 2,748 students

Special Awards and Recognition.

- ?? Selected as the American Association of University Administrators John L. Blackburn Award Winner as an Exemplary model of Administrative Leadership.
- ?? my.LSUE was profiled in the June 2000 Issue of Converge Magazine.
- ?? CARS Information Systems featured my.LSUE in their Winter 2000 Newsletter.
- ?? my.LSUE was selected as the winner of the National Association of CARS Users Annual Software Contest for 2000.
- ?? LSUE was selected by Yahoo! Internet Life Magazine as one of the Most-Wired Two-Year Campuses for 2000.
- ?? The LSUE Director of IT has been invited to present a session at the European Association of University Administrators Conference to be held in England, April 2002.
- ?? my.LSUE has been the subject of presentations at four national conferences including:
 - ✍✍ The Teaching in Higher Education (THE) Forum
 - ✍✍ The National Association of CARS Users
 - ✍✍ Noel Levitz National Conference on Student Retention
 - ✍✍ American Association of University Administrators National Conference

Student Satisfaction.

The "Registration Process" is often described by students as "unpleasant". my.LSUE is helping to change that. The following graph relates student satisfaction levels when surveyed about the registration process.



Outside Interest.

LSUE has received inquiries from both local and out-of-state institutions regarding the possible replication of some or all of the my.LSUE system. Universities expressing interest include:

- ✍✍ UL Lafayette
- ✍✍ Southeastern Louisiana
- ✍✍ Northwestern State
- ✍✍ LSU – Alexandria
- ✍✍ LSU – Shreveport
- ✍✍ University of Georgia Law School
- ✍✍ College of Mount St. Joseph – Ohio
- ✍✍ University of Sioux Falls – North Dakota
- ✍✍ Indiana Wesleyan
- ✍✍ Jefferson Community College – Kentucky
- ✍✍ Georgetown College – Kentucky
- ✍✍ Southwestern Michigan College

The my.LSUE project has created a great deal of exposure for Louisiana. Everyone that sees a demonstration comments that they wish their institution had a similar system. One of the greatest accomplishments is the project history. Its primary goal was to streamline operations – it succeeded. The project was completed on schedule, under budget, and without bringing in additional staff.

Benefits Achieved/Expected

The greatest benefit achieved through the my.LSUE project is the increased levels of student satisfaction with various campus services. This is demonstrated in the chart below through data provided by the ACT student satisfaction survey.

Program (or agency):	my.LSUE					
Objective:	Increase Student satisfaction levels with enrollment related processes. (Source: ACT Student Satisfaction Survey)					
	FY 2000		FY 2001		FY	
Performance Indicators	Standard	Actual	Standard	Actual	Standard	Actual
Registration Process	3.85	3.99	3.84	4.16		
Advising Information	3.92	3.81	3.93	4.01		
General Admissions / Entry Procedures	3.82	3.99	3.86	4.16		
Billing and Fee Payment	3.81	4.03	3.83	4.06		
Financial Aid Services	4.01	4.31	4.05	4.39		
Computing Services	4.12	4.39	4.16	4.5		



The ACT Student satisfaction survey measures student satisfaction levels in a variety of campus areas. A score of 5 indicates the student is very satisfied with a given area. The standard listed in each year is the national average of other participating two-year institutions.

Cost Savings.

The introduction of the my.LSUE system led to a significant reduction in the number of students that were using the traditional telephone registration system. As a result, it was decided to discontinue the telephone system providing substantial cost savings. Due to new releases of hardware and software from the vendor, LSUE was facing a future upgrade in the amount of \$31,000. This can be considered a future cost savings. An annual savings of over \$9,000 has been realized based upon the elimination of telephone line charges and the associated hardware/software maintenance contracts.

LSUE will print and mail final grades to students for the last time upon completion of the Fall 2001 semester. Based upon past costs, the registrar estimates the savings to be \$5,900.

Pitfalls Encountered

The project ran rather smoothly throughout. There were two areas in which issues arose. The first was the delivery of the kiosk units with the second being related to the IP telephony gateway portion of the project.

Six of the fourteen original kiosk had to be replaced due to damage received during shipping. Touchvision, Inc. worked closely with us to resolve the problem. This did not impact the overall project. Rather it only provided a small delay in the final rollout of the units.

While we were able to successfully implement the IP telephony gateway functions, the client software caused unidentifiable conflicts with other aspects of the system. This coupled with major changes in the vendor's architecture, (moving from a single server to multiple server configuration), caused us to remove this feature from the final configuration. my.LSUE has proven itself to be extremely user friendly and easy to use eliminating the need for the one-on-one contact the gateway feature was to provide. The final project was not adversely affected by the shortcomings of this element of the project.

Recommendations to Agencies Planning to use this Technology

The two most important elements of the my.LSUE project have been the ease of use coupled with the high visibility provided by the kiosk units. The development focus on such a project should center upon the interface design and the feature set being provided. We were careful to address the shortcomings of our old system while concentrating on the layout to create an intuitive system for both faculty and students. Many institutions are now providing web-based services on campus. A key to my.LSUE's success has been the integration of these multiple services into a single product.

Such a project allows the institution to reevaluate its core business practices and how it interacts with students. Institutions should view a project such as this as an opportunity to embrace change. This project has and will continue to change the way we interact with our students.



VI FINAL COST VS. BUDGET

	Category	Budgeted	Actual	Surplus
A	Equipment	116,547.00	106,668.72	9,878.28
B	Software	57,075.00	51,235.15	5,839.85
C	Telecommunications	2,800.00	1,200.00	1,600.00
D	Professional Services	0	0	0
E	Other Costs	0	0	0
	Total Project Cost	176,422.00	159,103.87	17,318.13



VII ITEMIZED LIST OF PROJECT EXPENSES

Touchvision Kiosk Enclosure with Computer and Touchscreens Touchvision Inc. - LSUE PO #R605596	\$	91,000.00	\$ 79,730.00	\$ 11,270.00
First Class Internet Classroom Server. Dell Computers - LSUE PO #R605436	\$	10,200.00	\$ 9,811.00	\$ 389.00
Citrix Winframe Server. Dell Computers - LSUE PO #R605436	\$	9,786.00	\$ 9,171.00	\$ 615.00
Vocaltec IP / Telephony Gateway Server. Dell Computers - LSUE PO #R605436	\$	4,571.00	\$ 5,138.00	\$ (567.00)
Dialogic D/21H DSP Board for Vocaltec IP / Telephony Gateway Alliance Systems - LSUE PO #R605433	\$	990.00	\$ 1,090.00	\$ (100.00)
APC Battery Backups Time Trend Computers - LSUE PO #R606249			\$ 1,728.72	\$ (1,728.72)
Telecommunications				
Stipends to sites hosting remote kiosks	\$	2,800.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,600.00
Software				
CIS Edvanta Web Registration Module	\$	20,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
CIS Edvanta Web Admissions Module	\$	6,000.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
CIS Edvanta Web Faculty/Student Module CARS Information Systems - PO #L605425	\$	16,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
First Class Internet Classroom Server Software Anchor Computer Sales - PO #R605424 and #R605511	\$	5,000.00	\$ 10,045.15	\$ (5,045.15)
Vocaltec IP / Telephony Gateway Software Alliance Systems - LSUE PO #R605433	\$	4,080.00	\$ 4,095.00	\$ (15.00)
Citrix Winframe Software Computer Services of America - LSUE PO #R605662	\$	5,995.00	\$ 5,595.00	\$ 400.00



